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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: (C) OIL FOR JORDAN: GOK AWAITS SPECIFIC REQUEST

Classified By: AMBASSADOR RICHARD H. JONES; REASON 1.5 (B,D)

[11.](#) (C) SUMMARY: Foreign Minister Shaykh Sabah told the Ambassador March 10 that Kuwait still awaits a specific request for support from Jordan (whose FM Muasher was due here later in the day). He spoke ambiguously about whether Kuwait's \$100 million deposit in the Jordanian Central Bank is just a deposit or an unofficial grant. On Iraq, Shaykh Sabah said "do it quickly"; he repeatedly requested that his government receive formal notification "at least one or two days" in advance of hostilities. He urged the USG to be sensitive to Saudi Arabia's need for discretion in its cooperation with us. Shaykh Sabah regretted that the UAE had not done more to push its proposal that Saddam leave office. He also regretted disunity on the UN Security Council, but blamed France, which he said would be "crazy" to veto the latest draft resolution. END SUMMARY.

[12.](#) (U) The Ambassador, accompanied by Pol Chief (Notetaker), met with First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmed al-Jabir al-Sabah March 10. MFA Undersecretary Amb. Khaled al-Jarallah sat in along with Amb. Khaled al-Babbain, Director of the Americas Department, and Amb. Ahmed al-Fahd, Director of the Minister's Office.

(C) OIL FOR JORDAN

[13.](#) (C) The Ambassador said he had an instruction to urge GOK support for Jordan in the event the supply of oil from Iraq is cut off. Shaykh Sabah said Kuwait has taken no decision on providing oil, awaiting a specific request from King Abdullah to the Amir. (Jordan's FM Marwan Muasher was due to arrive in Kuwait later in the day, and the Kuwaitis seemed to expect him to bring a message from the King.) Meanwhile, Shaykh Sabah noted, the GOK has deposited \$100 million in Jordan's Central Bank. He laughed that the GOJ had asked if it could use that money, and Kuwait replied: "it's yours; why did we put it in your name?" The Ambassador sought to clarify whether this meant the money -- which we had always understood was just a deposit, a form of balance-of-payments support -- was in effect a grant. Shaykh Sabah responded ambiguously: "We told them, if you can't use it, why did you take it?" (COMMENT: This may be a signal that the \$100 million is a de facto, off-budget grant, but we do not consider that clearly established. END COMMENT.)

(C) IRAQ: "DO IT QUICKLY"

[14.](#) (C) There was considerable discussion about Iraq. The Ambassador reiterated the USG's deep appreciation for all of Kuwait's support, noting that he had publicly described it as "1000 percent of our wildest dreams." Several times during the conversation, Shaykh Sabah underscored his desire that we act quickly to eliminate Saddam's regime: dragging out the process only allows opposition and complications to snowball, he emphasized. Similarly, he urged that we move as fast as possible to hand the governing of Iraq back to Iraqis. He specifically -- and repeatedly -- requested that the USG give the GOK "at least one or two days' official notice" in advance of hostilities.

[15.](#) (C) He also went out of his way to urge the USG to be sensitive to Saudi Arabia's need for discretion in its cooperation with us, noting that Kuwait "will never forget" the Saudi role in liberating it from the Iraqi invasion. He was gratified that there are now some 5,000 Saudi troops in Kuwait, along with about 4,000 from the UAE. He was pleased with the UAE's initiative in proposing that Saddam step down to avert war, but regretted that the UAE had not been more active in pushing the proposal, leaving Kuwait to do most of the diplomatic work.

(C) AFTER THE WAR

[16.](#) (C) The Minister asserted that Kuwait feels a duty to help the Iraqi people and is giving facilities to the UN "upon request." He said Kuwait is "ready" with sufficient stocks to meet the UN's requests for humanitarian supplies, which he cited from memory as 20,000 MT wheat, 20,000 MT flour, and 1 million loaves of bread/day. The Ambassador praised Kuwait's role in establishing the Humanitarian Operations Center (HOC), whose formal inauguration he had

just attended. He also mentioned the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), and promised to introduce its head, LTG (Ret.) Jay Garner, to GOK officials when he comes to Kuwait next week. Shaykh Sabah was confident that Iraq, "the richest country in the Arab world, and I'm not just talking about oil," could fund its own reconstruction/development in the medium to long term. He said he would contact his old friend Adnan Pachachi to urge him to act for the greater good of Iraq. In the Shaykh's view, what the Iraqi people need most is to feel free; he argued against forcing our notions of democracy on them too quickly.

(C) DEPLORING UNSC DISUNITY

17. (C) Shaykh Sabah lamented the disunity of the UN Security Council, noting that Kuwait always wants international organizations to be united: otherwise "the big fish are eating the small fish." When the Ambassador assured him that we are trying to strengthen the UN, but that we will proceed with or without a new UNSCR, the Shaykh remarked that it is far too late for us to back down now in any case. He said he had liked UK FM Jack Straw's reply to his French counterpart. France, he added, would be "crazy" if it vetoed the latest draft UNSCR.

18. (C) The Ambassador remarked that the "coalition of the willing" is larger than many people realize: it includes not only the UK and Australia, but the Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Romanians, Ukrainians, and perhaps the Bulgarians and Albanians, not to mention the countries of the region that are allowing use of facilities. Shaykh Sabah remarked that the GOK had given permission to the Ukrainians. (This has not yet filtered down to the working level, however, since Ukrainian Ambassador reports he still does not have confirmation of Kuwaiti acceptance of the Ukrainian draft SOFA.)

19. (C) COMMENT: Shaykh Sabah's bottom line was pretty clear: move quickly, get rid of Saddam and his regime, then give Iraq back to the Iraqis as soon as possible, without trying to mold it in our image. On support for Jordan, the key appears to be a specific GOJ request at the highest level. JONES